

## Guided Meditation: Steadiness

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So I want to welcome everyone. Welcome back. And I'll be continuing the topic this week in *The Art of Being Nobody and Somebody*, exploring the self and not-self.

So before we begin the meditation, you know, I wanted to reflect on one of the teachings that was a turning point in my own meditation practice. It came from a Buddhist nun, Sister Susila. And I've been practicing, you know, doing what I did most of my life, you know, trying to accomplish things, approaching meditation with lots of energy and intensity. But something wasn't working for me. I wasn't getting settled and concentrated, you know.

And what she said to me was actually very simple. She said, contentment is a prerequisite for *samādhi*, for concentration. And over time, you know, that kept resounding in my mind. You know, I allowed it to sink in. And I learned to relax the quality of my efforts. But I sustained the steadiness of my efforts, until I found my own way to be both tranquil and alert.

And that teaching continued to deepen in me. I saw that I could be content with a sad mind, and content with an agitated mind, and even content with pain in my body. You know, so maybe we can approach the sitting with an attitude of being content with our own minds, just as they are right now, within our own bodies, just as they are.

So let's begin this meditation, taking an alert and a relaxed posture, gently closing the eyes, allowing ourselves to arrive here, leaving behind any plans for later today. The conversations, the roles we play, the things unfinished, just putting them aside. Just this body here, always here, always now, immediate now. Taking a few slow deep breaths, and with each exhale allowing the body to relax a little more, settling into the cushion, the chair, the ground. And when you're ready, allowing the breath to return to its natural rhythms.

And you might bring some gentle attention to how you are holding yourself. And if sitting, perhaps upright, with a sense of dignity. If lying down, perhaps allowing the body to feel long,

open, and awake, resting in presence. The posture itself can support the mind. A posture that's both relaxed and awake can support our steadiness and confidence.

So seeing if the body can rest with a sense of dignity, a sense that this moment matters, that your presence matters. Perhaps imagining ourselves as a mountain, steady, grounded, belonging exactly where it is. Storms come, fog comes, wind, sunlight. The mountain allows all of it to come and go. There's nothing to hold together perfectly, just supported by the earth.

And with this sense of openness and dignity, allowing ourselves to receive the breath just as it is, the body breathing itself. Maybe feeling the rise and fall of the breath, the gentle expansion and softening of the body. The breath moving in and out with the same air that moves throughout the whole world around us.

And if thoughts, sensations, or feelings arise, we can allow them to simply move through awareness the way clouds move through the sky, like weather moving through the sky. The sky doesn't struggle against the clouds. It doesn't cling to the beautiful ones, or resist the dark ones. The sky has room for everything. Sounds arising and passing, sensations, thoughts, feelings arising and passing.

Awareness is like this open sky. It's spacious enough to hold this moment exactly as it is. This moment is enough. So resting like a mountain, open like the sky, breathing, aware. If the attention has drifted, kindly bring it back to the breath, to the body. Just welcome at home, here, now.

And now, as we near the end of this meditation, you might take a few deeper breaths, staying intimate with this body, here, now.